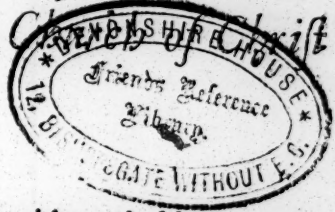


Joseph Townsend

An Epistle of tender Love to all Friends that are tender hearted, who are tender of the Honour of God, and seek the Glory of his worthy Name, and the Prosperity of his precious Truth, and the Peace and Unity of the Churches of Christ in this his blessed Day.



Dear Friends, Brethren and Sisters,

**T**O you is the Salutation of my Love in the Lord, who are called and chosen of the Lord to be faithful Witnesses to his Name, and Truth in this his glorious Day; wherein he is appeared in the Brightness of his Glory through his blessed Son Christ Jesus our blessed Lord and Saviour, to bring many home to himself that were a far off from him, that they may know a Habitation of Safety and a quiet dwelling Place, and be established upon that sure lasting Rock, that the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against my tender Friends; you that are come to the sure Foundation stand fast, and keep to Christ your Rock, he that was the Rock of the Righteous in all Ages, and in every Generation since the World began, and he will remain the same forever; therefore dear Friends, hold fast your hope in him, that he may establish your Goings in the Path of Holiness, and blessed way of Life, that he hath cast up by the word of his pure Power in this his glorious Day; wherein he hath blessed you with a true and certain knowledge of the Mysteries of his Kingdom, the way of Life and Salvation, and made you partakers of his heavenly Treasure; you that were poor in Spirit hath he made rich in Faith, and you that were weak hath he made strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might; that you may be able to stand in the Dominion of that bright shining Light, Life and Power of Immanuel, God with us, as a faithful Warrior against the man of sin, both within and without: Oh my dear Friends, be bold and valiant, for the Lord and his Truth, and as the Valiants of Israel be diligent, and fervent in your Zeal and Courage, to persevere in the Work of the Lord, and keep your Names in his Name and Power, and be faithful in your Testimony for his blessed Truth, even unto the End, against all Opposition whatsoever, and let nothing take place in your Hearts, to discourage or weaken you in your Testimony against that Spirit of Division and Separation, that opposeth the good Order and Discipline of the Church of Christ, that is established amongst you by the Power of God: Those that are crying out against Orders and Forms; but Wisdom is justified of her Children, and their Folly is made manifest, and their Fruits declare them to be some of the wandring Stars, that have lost their light; notwithstanding their specious Pretences the least Child of Light, whose Understanding is kept open and clear, may see that blindness and darkness is over them, so that they do not see their own Works of what sort they are; who are prescribing Orders for friends, and a Form for them to walk by, and how they shall keep their Men and Womens Meetings, and in what Method and Form; and yet are opposing the Form of Godliness that is attended by the Power, as you that have been faithful in the Lord's Work and Service, are Members of those Meetings which they despise, and are made living Witnesses of, and have had large Experience of his Power and Presence to attend you from day to day, in your Works of Piety and Charity; and feel his Blessings shewred down upon you to your great Comfort, and living Refreshment; pure Praises to the Lord our God over all forever, who is the Rock of our Safety, as our Eye is to him; therefore have we no cause to be discouraged, though Men despise and revile us, for God is with us of a truth; so we have good cause to believe that he will fight the Battle for us, and be too hard for them, and overturn them all in his own appointed Time and Season, that rise up against us; therefore in patience possess your Soul, and cast your Care upon the Lord, who careth for you, and will stand by you, and uphold you by his Power, and make way for you through

all these things, that you shall be able to hold out to the End, and never grow weary of well-doing, as you follow Christ in the daily Cross; it's you that God will crown, but it's grievous to some that come forth with us to go from us, and turn against us *Demas* like, and prove disturbers of the Church's Peace, by their opposition and vain jangling against Orders and Discipline, and pretend they stand for their own, and others liberties in Christ, and yet would deny liberty to others, (*viz.*) to young People who have a desire to come to Men and Womens Meetings, and Friends of other Counties, if they are with us, they are also denied by them their liberty to come into their Meeting; so are not these in confusion that pretend one thing and practice another at the same Time, who have published their own weakness to the Nation, by their Endeavours to reproach Friends, thinking thereby to cover themselves; because they say, they have not caused these Rents and Divisions, and Differences among Friends, by bringing in any new Doctrine or unscriptural Discipline, but have made it out how and which way they were the cause of it very plain, that it is easier to be understood, (*viz.*) by opposing the good Order and Discipline, settled and established among Friends, as it is to be seen in a printed Paper, the Title *A Memorial for the present Generation*, and also for that which is to come; wherein they declare their dislike, and what opposition, they still stood in against Friends, and still do stand in the same, and resolved as I understand to continue in the Separation, except Friends will make a bargain with them, and give it under their hands in writing, to condemn ~~the good Order and Discipline~~ Liberty of Conscience, which they seem to contend for in words, but in work they deny it to others; they having lost the Power which should make way for their Testimonies; now they would come in upon Terms to be accepted as Ministers of Christ, but his Ministers are attended with his Power, which makes way for them in the Hearts of all People, where the Ground is good, whose Minds are well inclined, that they receive their Testimony with gladness of heart, as you are right sensible Blessed be the Name of the Lord forever, so need not complain for want of acceptance as they do: But my dear Friends, let none of these things discourage you in the Work and Service of the Lord, and stand over their Spirit, and touch not with them; but go on and do the work of your day with cheerfulness of heart, and readiness of mind, and fear not to stand in that Power, that will give you to see over the Devil and his Instruments; that have that Power of God in derision, and also that inward Sense as not sufficient to try Spirits by; but you that are Members of that Body of which Christ is Head, are seasoned with his Grace, and know the Inspiration of the Almighty, to give you an understanding; and you have an inward Sense by that Spirit which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God; and by this inward Sense you are able to try Spirits whether they are of God or not; and this gives you to see over the Devil, and his Instruments and Authority to judge them, and deny them, as moved so to do; so dear Children, and chosen of the Lord, keep your Dominion in the Truth, and hold fast that which you have received of God, that none take your Crown, which the Lord your God hath laid up in store for all his Saints, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, that are faithful unto the death; they shall have a Crown of Life, and as one said in his day to the Primitive Christians, so say I to you, *take heed that none spoil you with Philosophy and vain Deceit, or sensual Wisdom and* fair



fair Pretences from false Brethren, which may have a shew of Humility in Will-worship, not holding Christ the Head, unto which every Member is joyntly knit; from such turn away, and cleave to the Lord with your whole Heart, and hold fast the hope of the Gospel unto the End, that your Bow may abide in strength, and the Lord fill your Quivers with polished Arrows, that you may shoot at *Babylon* the Mother of Confusion, and wound her to the Heart, and spare not her Merchants, for they must weep and mourn, for the Day of the Lord will overtake them; therefore put on Strength and Courage, and stand in that Power, that will make you victorious over all *Zion's* Enemies, both within and without; then shall *Zion's* Children rejoyce in the Lord the God of all our Mercies, and sing high Praises with Glory and Honour to his Honourable Name, and glorious Power; because of his goodness and matchless Mercies unto us: for he is a showing down of his spiritual Blessings, and living Mercies to the gladdening of the Hearts of his People, for this is the Portion of the Righteous; therefore lift up your Heads the chosen of the Lord, and rejoyce in the God of your Salvation, who hath promised to create *Jerusalem* a Rejoycer, and her People a Joy, and he is fulfilling the same in the Hearts of *Zion's* Children; pure Praise to his worthy Name for evermore; so let none of these Contenders trouble you with their printing this unsavory Memorial; for if they have no better Fruits to publish to the World than this, *Viz.* their Contention with their Brethren, and Dislike and Opposition to the good Order and Discipline of the Church of Christ; their Memorial will not be blessed of the Lord, for the hand of the Lord is against it, and the Spirit that gave it forth; for such a Memorial to be left to future Ages, will never give them cause to call them blessed, that are the Authors thereof; for it's not the Gladtidings of good things, but sad Tidings to the upright in Heart, to hear that such as were once enlightened should so far lose their understanding, as to say, the way of Convincement is almost stopt, and should be so covered with Darkness, as to publish themselves to the World, ~~to in opposition to their Brethren, as to~~ give them cause to judge and deny them, and turn from them; what shall I say? the Lord will bring distress upon them, and upon all that joyn with them, if they repent not; for their unsavory Memorial cannot cover them from the All-seeing Eye of the Lord; for he beholds all their doings, and takes notice of it, and will plead with them, but thanks be to God a Remnant the Lord hath kept open and tender; they see that Christ the Light, Life, and who is the way of convincing; he is not stopt in the tender hearted, neither can their jangling stop the Work of the Lord, for Truth prospers in the Earth, and gets ground; and many are convinced of late up and down by the Light and Spirit of Truth: Praises to the Lord our God over all, who is adding to his Church daily, such as shall be saved; therefore ye Children of the Light and of the Day of God's Love, keep your Lamps trimmed, and furnished with the heavenly Oil, that you may enter in with the Bridegroom into the marriage Chamber, when the foolish are shut out; then will you be filled with the heavenly Treasure, and the Well-spring of Eternal Life, will sweetly flow into your tender Bosoms; for the Lord is the Portion of your Cup, and the Lot of your Inheritance, and will be forever as your Eye is unto him; to whom I commit you, and recommend you with true Breathings to the God of my Life, that he will preserve and keep you in a holy and harmless Life, low in his fear, that preserves you out of the Snares of Death for ever; that so to the Praise of his

Grace, and to the Glory of his Power who is over all, God blessed forever; you may live and out-live all Contentions in the Sense of that Life, that was before Death and Contention was, so as you abide in the Light, Life and Power of God, and walk in the way of Holiness; this is the way to keep all in the Unity of the true Faith, and holy Spirit of Truth which is the Bond of true Peace, and watch over one another for good, and live in love one with another; for by this shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, said Christ, if you love one another, and keep down all Spurrity, I intreat you for the Lord's sake, in your Families; and train up your Children in the fear of the Lord, as becomes the Truth, in that which is comly and commendable; and be you such good Patterns unto them, that they following your Example of Holiness, may prevent such as watch over you for evil, and rejoyces to see it, that they may spread it abroad to the Dishonour of Truth, and cause the uncircumcised to rejoyce; as you may see, how false Brethren print and publish things to the Nation to defame the Truth, and those that profess it, as in their printed Memorial may be seen what reviling and reproachful bitter words they have vented against Friends, and are complaining of reflections from them, and are judging Friends for that which they are in the Practice of, and so condemn themselves, and yet pretend they seek for Peace and Reconciliation, and bring forth such Fruits to maintain Contention, at the same time all in one sheet of Paper, so their Works contradict their Pretences; but dear Friends, do you study to be quiet, and mind the Lord's Business in your Men and Womens Meetings, and do your endeavours to discharge your Consciences in all things towards God and Man, and take heed of giving place to any thing that would make the Offence of the Cross to cease, but stand as Pillars in the House of God, and go no more forth, and help to bear the Burthens of the weak, and take them by the hand, and encourage young People to come to their Meetings, such as are tender and of a good Life, that they may learn, so that your Off-spring may succeed you in the Work and Service of the Lord, and may act for God when you are in your Graves, notwithstanding they deny them that Liberty, and heed not the blind Comparison of *Gehazi*; you that are Members of those Meetings, run not for covetous Ends as he did, but are willing to succour and relieve such as are in distress, which proves their Comparison frivolous and vain like the rest of their Works, who pretend they have been greatly concerned, and striving to make up the breach, but they do not strive lawfully, and so are disappointed of their expectation, and are like so to be, till they repent and turn to the Lord, and cease from Contention and Opposition, and be reconciled to their Brethren: If they do in reality desire to make up the breach, this is the way for them to come into Unity and Fellowship again with their Brethren, and then they may offer their Gift, and find acceptance with the Lord and his People, as in Times past; but if they will not return but still stand in Opposition, the fault is in themselves, and they must bear their own Burthen; but be not you disquieted at them but pity them, and be ready to do them good if you can; but do you stand fast, and keep your Habitation in the precious Truth unto the End, that God over all may have the Honour, and the Glory, and the Praise, for he alone is worthy both now and forever more, saith your true Friend and Sister in the Fellowship of the Gospel, in which I conclude, desiring you not to strive with them, but keep to the peaceable Truth,

*Theophila Townsend:*

*Cirencester, the 12th. of the  
3d. Month, 1690.*

#### ISAIAH LII. 7.

*How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him, that bringeth Glad-tidings of good things, and publisheth Peace and Salvation, and saith to Zion, thy God Reigneth.*

Let this Epistle be read among Friends in their Meetings, as they in the Wisdom of God shall see a Service for it.